



Body: Skin: Cocoon: Transformation: A Course in Experience Design:

Reconsidering our projects as transformational experiences for our audience.

Keywords: transdisciplinary, transformation, experiential learning

We constantly evolve and change. As we grow, we slough off old skin, and grow new skin. We always need a protection while we grow, just as a caterpillar needs a chrysalis, as it transforms into a butterfly. In this class, we will learn to translate a project into a creative container, which provides a transformational experience for a viewer/audience/experiencer. Projects can be expressed in any discipline or medium or a combination.

Body: Skin: Cocoon: Transformation:

In this class we will create a transformational container, a “skin”, a “cocoon”, that provides an experience of transformation for the viewer/ audience.

This “experiential container” can employ any medium or discipline or any combination. It could be a journalism story, a performance, a dance, an article of clothing, a work of art, an economic framework.

Some examples of Combinations/Hybrids: Your “container” could be a news story illustrated with dance, for example, or a garment that gives the wearer a feeling of being cocooned, and embraced. The project must be experiential, rather than merely conveying information or explanation. It must consider and incorporate the aspects of body, space, and time. The measure of success will be that the experiencer will gain a transformed understanding of your subject. They will never be able to think about it in the same way again. We will employ methods of storytelling and “memory creation”, mapping your world, brainstorming. Students will work in small teams, no more than 4 or 5.

Memory Exercise*1:

Our first activity for this workshop will be a “memory creation” exercise. We will create our favorite childhood memory from chosen toys and random parts. We will share our creations and identify shared themes.



We will then map our world)*, and employ brainstorming), on the first day of the course, to help students find common ground; identifying transformational elements and themes that can be used as an inspirational springboard to create their project.

Throughout the week, we will employ the process and principles of Design Thinking, “Hear, Create, Deliver”² and alternately, “Feel, Imagine, Create, Share, Witness, Learn, Evolve/Iterate”³. We will learn to create and iterate quick thumbnail-sketch prototypes of our concept, and to test our prototypes with classmates or other “experiencers”, employing these quick prototypes as learning tools for redesign and evolution of the concept.

Part of prototype testing will be documenting our learning; gathering peoples experiences, photographs, observations, stories. We will also learn methods for positive team collaboration and brainstorming. We will learn

1 Design For Change Design Thinkin guide for Schools, Teachers Guide pg 22: <http://www.designforchange.us/>

2 From IDEO.org’s Human Centered Design (HCD) Toolkit pgs 8-9 www.ideo.org

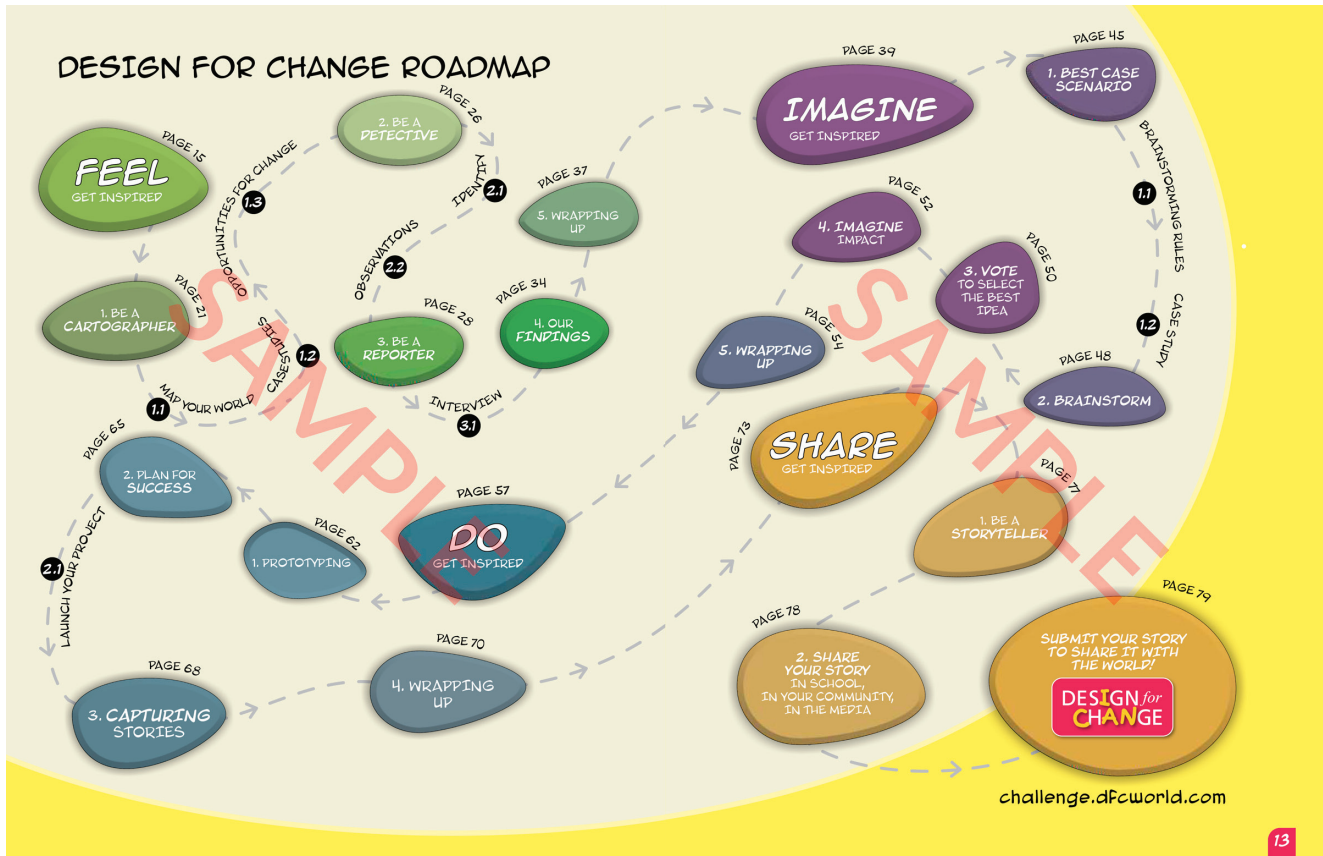
3 Hybrid arch of creative process inspired by: Stanford DSchool’s five phases of design: <http://stanford.io/2foBN7V>, Design for Change Steps: Feel, Imagine, Do, Share - <http://bit.ly/2hoNzMD>, Marty Neumeier’; Feeling; Seeing, Dreaming, Making, Learning from Meta Skills by Marty Neumeier - <http://bit.ly/2ixoxwf>, Director of Transformation at Liquid Agency.

techniques for generating ideas, and techniques for refocusing and refining our project concepts (divergence/convergence)⁴.

Map our World⁵:

We will learn to “ be a cartographer” and map our experience:

“Look at the world with fresh eyes and notice the unnoticed. Learn to view your world through multiple filters - seeing, hearing, and feeling, and map it.” (see appendix).



Design as an Elegant System:

We will explore systems thinking as a tool to refine designs (elegance/simplicity: all elements pull their “design weight”).⁶

Final Project Presentations:

On our final day we will share our final projects. We will then transition to a debrief, where we include “documentary” story telling; “stories” from experiencers about their experience of the projects, and also “stories” from the team about how their thinking evolved and transformed as they developed their “cocoon”.

Considering Skin:

Throughout the course, we will weave in many ways of considering skin. Here are a few prompts:

Skin is the largest organ in the body. Let’s brainstorm all the things skin does for us; such as: protection; the place where touch and feeling occur; the point of interface between our inner and outer worlds, osmosis, envelope, flexibility, synthesis of vitamin D.

Skin is where we connect to others, the point of interbeing, of inter-relatedness: a hug, a handshake, a dance, playing tag.

Cocoon/Storytelling: Storytelling as a container, a cocoon for transformation of understanding.

4 Divergence/Convergence: From Design For Change by Tim Brown, CEO of IDEO, pgs 66-7

5 Design For Change Design Thinkin guide for Schools, Teachers Guide pg 22: <http://www.designforchange.us/>

6 Metaskills by Marty Neumeier, The Discipline of Uncluing - pg 185

Rough Draft Course Outline: Body: Skin: Cocoon: Transformation:

• Day 1: Feeling, Exploration, Discovery:

Welcome Circle Exercise 1: begin with circle, and introductions, then guided 5 minute meditation: Experience in this moment being “in your skin”, being “in the world”.

Exercise 2: Feeling: Favorite Childhood Memory exercise. Identify common themes.

Exercise 3: Observation/Ideation: Map your world;⁷ Map bright spots (what feels good), hot spots (what doesn't feel good or feels broken).

3a Find common themes: post it vote for top 3 most compelling focus areas, common themes: to fix or enhance a part of your world.

Exercise 4: Walking Silent Meditation Brainstorm with the topic Skin, Cocoon, Containers, Metamorphosis: -“I am in my skin. It feels like...”, silently put up post-its on a brainstorm board. (divergence- create lots of ideas)

-“identify skin in the world around you and what does it do, create, serve? (examples: walls (define space for a purpose), windows (create an interface between worlds), tree bark (protects, nourishes), cell walls (transmit nutrients, transfer out what is no longer needed, absorb oxygen, release CO₂), clothing (warmth, protection, self expression).

- skin, cocoon in relation to space, time, body.

- Cocoon -> Transformation: give examples of “containers for transformation”.

- Storytelling as Cocoon/Transformation

4b. Come together, identify compelling ideas: Document, photograph brainstorm board. Build/collect a “toolbox” of concepts.

Exercise 5. Convergence: Teams choose a focus, From your “Map Your World Map”, post-it vote to choose a design challenge: Write a 1 sentence design brief -> We want to transform...?, How Might We...?:

5b. Each team member draws 5 thumbnail sketches of possible prototypes to answer the HMW design brief question

5c. interview each other, “Would you find this useful? What do you like, what would you change, how would you build on this idea, what could a “wild idea” version of this be?”, draw 1 new thumbnail, post ideas.

5d. Team members post-it vote 1 or 2 most compelling ideas. Choose an idea to prototype, team draws a whiteboard prototype of idea together.

• Day 2. Exploration, Observation, Investigation (team self-directed):

Exercise 1: team members go **out in the world and observe, investigate:** investigate analogous situations, interview people about their experience of current situation, target for transformation (ex. If your theme were “How Might We transform waiting in line?”, find situations with long lines, short lines, no lines; analogous situations might be long phone hold times, waiting for the bus, waiting rooms)

Exercise 2: Team meets for a Debrief Huddle (in person):

Whiteboard: each team member puts up post-its, photographs of discoveries, learnings, observations, things that stood out. Post-it vote most compelling features, what stood out, and most common themes. Identify “what works”, what “doesn't work”. Transform these into “how might we... questions” (HMW).

Exercise 3. As a team, create 1. a “discovery board” of what they learned from investigation, and 2. a “metamorphosis brainstorm board of “what would a metamorphosis of this subject look like?” to share with the class on Day 3.

• **Day 3: Create (Prototype), Test, Learn, Refine:**

Morning Welcome: guided 5 minute meditation: being “in your skin”, being “in the world”. Then quick check in “I am in my skin. Right now that feels like (1 word to describe how you feel)”. Go around the circle.

Exercise 1: Teams show and tell their boards. Class offers feedback: 3 post-it votes for each class member for most compelling observations and ideas. Pick three most compelling, then 3 post-its to build on these ideas.

Exercise 2: Each team gets an **opportunity to revise their 1 sentence “Design Challenge” statement** for their design brief.

Exercise 3: Thumbnail: Team - together **draw a prototype “cocoon”** for your team project.

Exercise 4: Prototype: Create a quick prototype of your idea (materials, cloth, textiles, random toy parts, cardboard, paper, scissors, hot glue, and other rapid prototyping materials, “quick photo printers”, will be provided for prototyping.

Exercise 5: Test: Each team will pair off with another team to test their prototypes, document what works, what could work better, what surprised you, realizations, how have your perceptions of the design brief mission statement changed, or been reinforced? Another opportunity to rewrite/refine your brief.

Exercise 6: Class share about the day’s experience.

• **Day 4. Prototype, Test, Learn, Iterate:**

Teams carry out self-guided cycle of prototype, test, learn, iterate to create final prototype “Experience” for Day 5. Create documentation: Telling a story: “stories” from experiencers about their experience of the projects, and also “stories” from the team about how their thinking evolved and transformed as they developed their “cocoon”.

• **Day 5. Share, Learn, Evolve:**

Exercise 1: Teams present projects; provide “Experience Cocoons” for classmates.

Team documents experiencers process (photographs, video, observations)

Exercise 2: Quick-Gather Documentation: Teams, Experiencers share their experience, realizations, learnings, observations. Quickly gather any new stories, collect new learnings, affirmations of your concept’s evolution.

Exercise 3: Documentation: Teams quickly create “summary board” of “learnings stories”: stories from experiencers about their experience of the projects, and also stories from the team about how their thinking evolved and transformed as they developed their “cocoon”. Identify features in the project of body, space, time.

Exercise 4: Evolve: Quick go round: What would be your next evolution, iteration of your concept?

Final Farewell: Snacks, Class debrief, open discussion, Q and A, farewell “circle of good wishes”.

THE END | Thank you for reading :) ~Lisa Hoag

Additional Notes:

* Universal curricular sub-themes to be interwoven throughout the course:

-learn to identify features of body, space, time as we go through the process.

-identify metaphors for skin

-documenting process: collect stories, photos, things that stood out, observations, discoveries